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Barnes

Thomas Fuller and the Essay

THOMAS FULLER AND THE ESSAY

BY

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Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the
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IN

THE GRADUATE SCHOOL

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I HEREBY RECOMMEND THAT THE THESIS PREPARED UNDER MY SUPER-
VISION BY Mildred Barnes

ENTITLED Thomas Fuller and the Essay

BE ACCEPTED AS FULFILLING THIS PART OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE
DEGREE OF Master of Arts in English

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on
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CHAPTER I
Introduction.¹

Nineteenth century critics are extravagant, even lavish in their eulogies of Thomas Fuller. "The inimitable, the incomparable Fuller," says one.² "The most sensible and the least prejudiced great man of an age that boasted a galaxy of great men," says Coleridge, and in a final burst of enthusiasm he adds that "Fuller, beyond all writers next to Shakespeare, excites in me the sense and emotion of the marvellous, the degree in which a given faculty is possessed and manifested so far surpassing what one would have thought possible in a single mind."³

Thomas Fuller, to whom the eulogies quoted above refer, was a most honest, prolific, and original author of the seventeenth century. The appreciations and critical estimates of him did not begin until the nineteenth. However, that he was in fact one of the most popular prose writers of his time is proved by the numerous editions of his works printed during the 17th century. "The History of the Holy War," first published in 1639, and "The Holy and Profane State," (1642) went through four editions each.

- 1.--This introduction is a summary of the opinions of a score of 19th century critics of Thomas Fuller. I have cited quotations from only eight of the most prominent ones.
- 2.--James Crossley, Retrospective Review, Vol 3. p. 53.
- 3.--Coleridge, "Notes on English Divines." p. 127.

"Andronicus, or The Unfortunate Politician" had five editions between 1646 and 1649, besides also being published in Dutch in 1659; and his Meditations, consisting of "Good Thoughts in Bad Times," "Good Thoughts in Worse Times," and "Mixed Contemplations in Better Times," were edited seven times between 1647 and 1680.⁴

After the seventeenth century Fuller was neglected until Coleridge, Lamb, Henry Rogers, and other nineteenth century critics, called attention to his literary excellence, all of them being convinced that posterity had not done justice to his memory. It is chiefly by the efforts of these men that he now occupies a high place among English humorists. What, then, are their estimates of his personality and style? To discuss exhaustively the great mass of nineteenth century criticism on Fuller is beyond the scope and purpose of this paper. In this introduction I shall give the general consensus of nineteenth century opinion of Fuller as a man and a writer as preliminary to my study of that one particular phase of his prose, its relation to the essay, which is the purpose of this thesis.

Critics agree that Fuller was a man of extensive and multifarious reading, of vast and digested knowledge which his extraordinary retentiveness of memory preserved ever ready for use, and considerable accuracy of judgment enabled him to apply it successfully.

4.--J.E.Bailey, Life of Fuller. Bibliography. Chap. 23, pp. 713-762.

It was said of him "that he could repeat five hundred strange words after once hearing them, and could make use of a sermon verbatim under the like circumstances."⁵ He was learned, yet his learning did not take away his keenness in judging of the modes of everyday life; and though indefatigable in literary pursuits, yet he found leisure to study life with real acuteness. A most sagacious and acute observer of human life and manners through all their varieties, his vigorous and just observation permeates his works.

Fuller was a thinker, and his province was thought rather than action. The storms of his age only confined him more to his own resources. He had sense and wisdom to pursue a right course, and to persevere in an even tenor of moderation. He would not sacrifice his vanity and good temper even for the King and the Church. His was an understanding clear and penetrating, which suspended judgment on main questions; and a temper far remote from fanaticism. "Perhaps," said Leslie Stephen, "he erred too much on the side of pliancy, until his continuous good temper toward his adversaries brought about the charge of lukewarmness to his friends."⁶ That he was a peace-lover is universally agreed, but not a coward. His opinions were independently adopted and unshrinkingly maintained. "To assent to the vague generalization that to love one's enemies is virtuous

5.--Henry Rogers. Edinburgh Review. Vol. 74, p. 358.

6.--Cornhill Magazine, Vol. 25. "Hours in a Library," p. 335.

is far easier than to treat them 'as ordinary beings who are very troublesome at the present but who may be better by and by' which was Fuller's attitude."⁷ There could be no greater proof of his wisdom than his moderation and broad-minded tolerance in a period of narrow prejudices and high party feeling. His inclination was to survey controversy in its length and breadth and historic consequences with a humane and judicial spirit.

Catholic in his opinions, just and liberal in his judgments, he was favorable to even such as differed from him, and could scarcely be unfair to a Puritan or a Papist, (though his deepest prejudices were anti-papal,) but recognized and applauded merit no matter where he found it. He did not hesitate to maintain--when it was dangerous to hold such opinions--that no just offense should be given to the Papists.

As to style, critics seem to agree that Fuller was a master of it, the general consensus of opinion being that in his case the style was always the man, and his wit, his quaintness, and his sweet and happy spirit were blended in the fragrance which surrounded all of his writings. He defied imitation for his unique individuality which was the product of his unrivalled facetiousness and quaintness. He wrote with ease and facility, and his pages are notable for their clearness and vigor as well as for their shrewd-

7.--Samuel McChord Crothers, "Pleasures of an Absentee Landlord and Other Essays." p. 115.

ness of thought. Whenever his style seems about to become uncompromising, we find some touch of delightful humor which is the leaven of the whole.

"Wit is the stuff and substance of Fuller's intellect, the warp and woof of his writings."⁸ It is the principal attribute of his genius, but is so various and assumes so many shapes, that one might as well try to define wit itself as to characterize his. Play on words and phrases, pet allusions, affected simplicity, odd similitudes, startling analogies, and ridiculous puns are essential elements of it. In fact, the secret of much of his facetiousness is that he forced the formal phraseology of an expiring school to play strange antics for the amusement of the new.

His humor, however, is innocent and childlike, the result of his joyous temperament, boundless good nature and buoyancy of spirit. As one of his critics said, "so exuberant is his wit, that as his very melancholy is mirthful, so his very wisdom wears motley."⁹ Although it was extravagant and sometimes might seem to run riot, yet it had none of the grossness of farce. Fuller was not a buffoon. His jokes on scripture were always free from any idea of indecency or intention of irreverence. Nor was he a satirist, for though he could on occasions be caustic and withering, he seldom was, and if he was, it was without bitterness or venom. He might perhaps indulge in a good-natured gibe, when an irresistible sense

8.--G.H.B.Masterman, "The Age of Milton." Chap. 8, p. 176.

9.--Henry Rogers. Edinburgh Review. Vol. 74, p. 342.

of the ludicrous forced him to rail gently at the foibles of those around him. His gifts did not lie in the direction of invective. Such was his innate kindness, that even when he wished to be most severe he often diverted the shaft at the very point of driving it home by some gentle touch; and no better testimony of his humanity can be given than that in all his voluminous writings, there is not one needlessly bitter word, nor one attempt to deliberately wound or slander an antagonist.

With irritating re-iteration Coleridge said, "God bless thee! Quaint old Tom Fuller!"¹⁰ The seventeenth century was an age of quaintness, not only in literature, but in gardens, architecture, costume, manners, and religion. Whatever was curiously and elaborately unnatural was the end to be attained by the large number of religious writers of the century to whom is applied the term "quaint." In its first meaning, i.e., by derivation, it meant refined, exact, scrupulously elegant. Later--in the age of Fuller--these same characteristics were still the aim, but they were attained by so elaborate a progress as to lose all ease and naturalness. Far-fetched allusions, labored conceits, pedantic quotations, alliteration, antithesis, puns, etc., appear in rapid succession, and almost bewilder the reader as he works his way through one page of them after another.

Fuller was considered as the master of the "quaint" school of the seventeenth century, and quaintness has become linked with his

10.--Coleridge, "Notes Theological, Political and Miscellaneous."
p. 101.

name because he is one of the few authors of merit and genius in whose writings this quality is conspicuous. Although a product of this school, he is almost entirely free from any of its most offensive faults and peculiarities such as useless and obscure quotations and vain pedantry so manifest in some of his contemporaries.¹¹ Language is true vesture to the thought, and he is quaint in his very thought. "Quaintness, with beauty indissolubly blended with it, is the element in which he lives and moves and has his being, his name having become inseparable from it."¹²

Quaintness, then, was a natural element of his writings (as was his wit), the one being as much nature in him as the other. It after all lay in his perception of his own absurdity, i.e., the use he made of technical language in a totally inappropriate sphere.

Yet he was not pedantic, but used his learning to support his own intellectual speculations and to fill up the gaps in his argument. Queer comparisons, startling analogies, audacious puns, abound everywhere. "Such was his natural bias to conceits that I doubt not upon most occasions it would have been going out of his way to have expressed himself out of them."¹³ His was the language of

11.--Robert Burton, "Anatomy of Melancholy."

12.--Leslie Stephen, "Hours in a Library." Cornhill Magazine, Vol. 25, p. 31.

13.--Charles Lamb. Prose Works. Vol. I, p. 166.

jocularity, his own vernacular idiom which clothed all the thoughts which issued from his mind; something so intimately a part of him, so fixed and settled in his intellect, that it would be useless to attempt to strip it off.

Another factor which his critics agreed contributed to the attractiveness and vividness of Fuller's style was his boundless faculty of illustration, that fecundity of fancy which adorned whatever it touched, and even invested bare fact and dry reasoning with unlooked-for beauty. Added to this was his use of antithesis for effects of balance and contrast, which nevertheless do not seem artificial but in nature and life as he himself viewed it. He had collected many traditional stories concerning eminent characters--by listening for hours to the garrulity of aged country folk whom he encountered in his progress with the King's army--¹⁴ and so had an inexhaustible fund for purposes of illustration, of whom no one knew better than he how to turn to best advantage. So well does he vary his treasures of memory and observation, so judiciously does he interweave his anecdotes and quotations and arguments, that the result could not be a more delightful checker-work of acute thought, opposite illustration, and original sentiment.

As a story-teller he was a consummate artist. "Fuller's way of telling a story for its eager liveliness and running commentary of the narrator, happily blended with the narration, is perhaps

14.--James Crossley. Retrospective Review. Vol. 3, p. 50.

unequalled."¹⁵

In conclusion, nineteenth century critics universally agree that Fuller is a compound of many elements, not only dissimilar, but sometimes even contradictory. His wit glows beneath his sentences and flashes forth in epigram. As if to steady this buoyancy of spirit, his pages show a weight of observation and shrewd common sense which is real wisdom. Finally, a quaintness of thought and language, curiously intermingled with the others, completes this unusual combination.

Leslie Stephen sums up the more moderate and well-balanced nineteenth century estimate of Fuller when he says, "his rise to the region of lofty eloquence is rare, his wisdom such as comes from excellent good sense without any great profundity of thought; his piety is that of a cheerful person who has never sounded the depths of despair or risen to ecstatic rapture; and his wit owes its charm to its being obviously the spontaneous outburst of an irrepressible buoyancy and childlike frivolity of amusement."¹⁶

15.--Charles Lamb. Prose Works. Vol. I, p. 66.

16.--Leslie Stephen, "Hours in a Library." Cornhill Magazine, Vol. 25, p. 39.

CHAPTER II.

The Character and The Essay.

"The character of the 17th century was a short account, usually in prose, of the properties, qualities, or peculiarities which serve to individualize a type."¹

When we speak of the 17th century character writing, we do not mean to imply that it is a form of literature which originated in and is peculiar to that century alone, but that it reached its height then, and contributed most to the development of prose writing in the following century.

In the 16th century there were certain popular books in England containing characters. Audelay's "Fraternity of Vagabonds," (1561) was one, and both Lodge and Green had some character writing in their works, although it was incidental.

The true creator of character writing, however, was Theophrastus, a successor of Aristotle. He wrote thirty sketches called "Ethical Characters," from Athenian society in the age of Alexander the Great, which touch on the surface with a good deal of humor, but are without reflective comment. His method was first to give a definition of a fault, then a succession of typical actions. These Characters were translated into Latin by Casaubon in 1592 and furnished the model for character writers in England from then until the end of the following century.

1.--E. C. Baldwin, Modern Language Publication. New Series. Vol. XII. Paper on The Relation of the 17th Century Character to the Periodic Essay.

The 17th century character differed from that which had preceded it in that it was not embodied in some other literary form, but became a distinct type with a fixed technique. This traditional style combined wit with brevity and usually resulted in a wealth of ideas clearly set forth in the smallest possible space; thought succeeded thought till the reader was forced to stop in very dizziness.

Bishop Hall, in 1608, used Theophrastus as the model of his "Characters of Virtues and Vices," but did not exactly follow his method of treatment. He thus helped to free the English character from the limitations which the Greek model would have put upon it. Sir Thomas Overbury's "Characters and Witty Descriptions of Properties of Certain Persons," (1614) introduced a witty satiric element in the character which aimed more at cleverness than truth. Lastly, John Earle, in his "Microcosmography, or a Piece of the World Set Forth in Essays and Characters," (1628) was the first of the character writers to analyze the character or to give more than one aspect of it. His superiority lay in his judicious and balanced view of human nature, his observations being always original and thoughtful.

The 17th century character and the Baconian essay were closely akin as literary forms and had never been dissociated. The titles "Essays and Characters,"² of many of the books of the century are

2.--We may mention here John Stephens, "Satirical Essays, Characters and Others," (1615), and in 1618, G.M. Geoffrey Minshul's "Essays and Characters of a Prison and Prisoners."

sufficient proof of this. The word 'essay' was evidently used as either synonymous or closely connected with the character. Nicholas Breton, in 1615, dedicated his book, "Characters Upon Essays, Moral and Divine," to Bacon, and made no distinction between his work and Bacon's essays.

The reason that the character and the Baconian essay are so closely allied is perhaps due to an inherent similarity between them. Essayists needed definiteness, and used the character as a device to keep their thought from becoming diffuse and indefinite, for the form³ of the character could give a certain concreteness to the general observations contained in the essay.

Notwithstanding this kinship of the two, there are several very noticeable differences which cannot be overlooked. In the first place, the technique of the character is much more precise and simple than that of the essay, which imposes a greater burden of individuality and originality upon the writer. In the character the paragraphs follow one after another like a catalogue, each having its topic sentence first in the form of a maxim, while in the essay one paragraph as a rule develops out of the preceding. Again, the beginning of the character is more brusque and direct⁴ than in the

3.--A type portrait based upon elaborated maxims.

4.--The True Gentleman, (p. 120), "We will consider him in his birth, breeding, and behaviour."

The Good Parishioner, (p. 72), "We will only describe his church reference; his civil part hath and shall be met with under other heads."

The Good Landlord, (p. 76), "Is one that lets his land on a reasonable rate, so that the tenant, by employing his stock and using his industry, may make an honest livelihood thereby."



essay. The character, after all, is the framework, the skeleton, with but little meat; the essay is that framework filled and rounded out into a complete whole. Fuller was a master of character writing. He went beyond any of his contemporaries in disregarding the conventional manner of writing characters. His mind was too original to allow his style to be governed by artificial restrictions, and the publication of his "Holy and Profane State," marked a still greater advance in the gradual freeing of character writing from classic tradition. The characters, which are the bulk of this work, are found in the first, second, fourth, and fifth books. There are forty-eight in all, only four⁵ of which conform very closely to the Theophrastic tradition. Fuller was too wise to force his natural flow of mind into a new fashion, or inflict upon it an artificial restraint. His characters, therefore, are written with more ease and variety than those of his contemporaries, having just enough point to render them striking, and force of expression enough to energize their diffuseness. In discussing the resemblance between Fuller's character-writing and the essay, there are three points which may be considered in order; the subjects which he treats, the manner in which he organizes his material, and his style.

5.--The Good Widow. (p. 19).
The Good Husband. (p. 6).
The Good Landlord. (p. 76).
The True Gentleman. (p. 120).

As to subject matter, here again the character approaches the essay. Practically all character books of the seventeenth century included descriptions of institutions, customs, and places. Fuller, like all his contemporaries, does not confine himself to descriptions of type characters only, but introduces along with these a variety of topics. As we turn his pages, reading one character after another, we find him discussing the English law of property inheritance from father to eldest son,⁶ and how this makes the problem of younger sons a perplexing one. In another place he tells of the diplomatic courtesy of the French kings who always gave a chain of gold to an ambassador upon his departure from France,⁷ or of a custom among "some of the West Indians who to expiate their sin of lying, used to let themselves bleed to their idols: a good cure for the quinsy, but no satisfaction for lying."⁸

Fuller was evidently interested in the problem of education, and makes many interesting suggestions along this line. He believed firmly that all schools should be free to any boy who desired to attend, but was too poor to pay the tuition, for "surely learning is the greatest alms that can be given."⁹ Of all the secondary

6.--The Younger Brother. (p. 37).

7.--The Ambassador. (p. 256).

8.--The Lyer. (328). The Profane State.

9.--The Good Schoolmaster. (p. 87).

schools Eton came nearest his ideal both in scholarship and spirit. With characteristic justice and good sense he sets a proper value on the teaching profession of which he thinks there is "scarce any profession in the commonwealth more necessary, which is so slightly performed,"¹⁰ and he exhorts school-masters to recollect that "eminencies of their scholars have commended the memories of their school-masters to posterity, who otherwise in obscurity had altogether been forgotten."¹¹

As the success of secondary schools depended a great deal on the school-masters, so the success of universities depended upon their heads. He gives us some very wise suggestions on this point in his character of a Good Master of a College.¹²

"His learning, if beneath eminency, is far above contempt. Sometimes ordinary scholars make extraordinary good masters.

"In his elections he respecteth merit, not only as the condition, but as the cause thereof.

"He disdains to nourish dissension amongst the members of his house.

"He is observant to do all due right to benefactors. If not piety, policy would dictate this unto him." Here is a touch of practical shrewd sense. But he does not stop with this, and adds, with his unfailing honesty and justice, "and though he respects not

10.--Chap. XXXI. (p. 85).

11.--Chap. XXXI. (p. 88).

12.--Chap. XXIX. (pp. 79-81).

benefactors' kinsmen, when at their first admission they count themselves born heirs--apparent to all preferment which the house can heap upon them, and therefore grow lazy and idle; yet he counts their alliance, seconded with mediocrity of desert, a strong title to college advancement."

Upon reading the characters we are at once surprised to find how informally and off-hand they begin,¹³ yet announcing the theme in the opening paragraph in a way so clear and direct that it leaves not the slightest room for doubt as to what it is. What could be more informal yet clearer than this? "I know the general cavil against general learning is this, that aliquis in omnibus est nullus in singulis: He that sips many arts, drinks of none. However, we must know that all learning, which is but one grand science, hath so homogeneous a body, that the parts therefore, do with a mutual service relate to, and communicate strength and lustre each to other. Our artist, knowing language to be the key of learning, thus begins."¹⁴ Or again, "The Jews, anno 1348, were banished out of most countries of Christendom, principally for poisoning of springs and fountains. Grievous, therefore, is their offence, who infect colleges, the fountains of learning and religion; and it concerneth the church and state, that the heads of such houses be rightly qualified, such men as we come to character."¹⁵

13.--See page 3, foot-note 4, for exceptions.

14.--The General Artist. (p. 56).

15. The Good Master of a College. (p. 78). In this connection also one should include The Good Schoolmaster, (p. 85), and The Good Patron. (p. 74).

In spite of the fact that each character is described and explained by the use of maxims, the effect is not a series of disconnected proverbs. These numerous maxims develop the theme set forth in the first paragraph, and give the character a conciseness and concreteness which brings it vividly before the mind of the reader. The skeleton of the character, it is true, is made up of maxims, and if we were to consider only these, the character would still be complete, described in a dozen or more shrewd sayings. But Fuller fills in each maxim and rounds them out by additional comment and elaboration, sometimes by relating incidents or giving examples, sometimes by quotations, or bits of verse and doggerel. It is this manner of stuffing his characters which makes them more like the essay.

The conclusions of Fuller's characters have a real essay touch as well as their beginnings. Instead of stopping abruptly as soon as the last maxim has been commented on--as was the case with those who actually followed the classic form, he rounds off the whole, sometimes almost striking a true personal note. I find an example of it in one place where he says, "But I have done with this wrangling companion, half afraid to meddle with him any longer, lest he should commence a suit against me for describing him. The reader may easily perceive, how this look of the Profane State would swell to a great proportion, should we therein character all the vicious persons who stand in opposition to those which are good. But this, one's pains may well be spared, seeing that rectum est index sui et obliqui; and the lustre of the good formerly described,

will sufficiently discover the enormity of those who are otherwise. We will therefore instance in three principal offenders, and so conclude."¹⁶ And then again in a quaintly personal way with a touch of humor, "But I dare dwell no longer on this subject. When the pope earnestly wrote to King Richard the First not to detain in prison his dear son, the martial bishop of Beavois, the king sent the pope back the armour wherein the bishop was taken, with the words of Jacob's sons to their father, 'see whether or no this be the coat of thy son.' Surely a corslet is no canonical coat for me, nor suits it with my clergy profession to proceed any further in this warlike description, only we come to give an example thereof."¹⁷

A fourth and last feature of structure totally unlike the regular traditional character is digression. This trait, however, is not apparent in most of the characters, but it does come out clearly in two, while the tendency is noticeable in the treatment of a couple of the others.¹⁸ In the midst of his description of the "Good Soldier," Fuller gives us a three-page dissertation on the causes and evils of duelling,¹⁹ while again, in the "Constant Virgin," we are entertained with a discussion on blushing.²⁰ Digression

16.--The Common Barretor. The Profane State. (p. 330).

17.--The Good General. (p. 262).

18.--The Faithful Minister, (p. 62), and The Ambassador. (p. 256).

19.--Chap. XXXV.(pp. 99-102).

20.--Chap. XII. (pp. 29-30).

never became a prominent element of Fuller's character writing, but it was only natural that his spontaneous flow of thought should sometimes escape bounds. Some of his other works, such as his sermons and histories, contain more of this quality, but the traces of it which we find in his characters, show an attempt at least to bring that form nearer to the essay.

In discussing the resemblances of Fuller's character writing and the essay as to style, we must take into consideration the substance and the manner of treatment. The two together show the gradual breaking down of the old character form, thereby paving the way for many essay qualities. Substance itself is not merely the subjects which he treats, but ideas as well, and in Fuller these are extremely important. He was a thinker with a great deal of keen observation and shrewd common-sense, and every page of his characters teems with his varied, original and sound ideas.

The maxims, which are the frame-work of his characters, show an irresistible and incontrovertible wisdom, sometimes paradoxical, sometimes genial, and sometimes even grave. In describing the good Bishop he says, "his life is so spotless, that malice is angry with him, because she cannot be angry with him."²¹ Here is a touch of genial wisdom. "The elder brother is the one who made haste to come into the world to bring his parents the first news of male posterity, and is well rewarded for his pains."²² Occasionally

21.--The Good Bishop. (p. 222).

22.--The Elder Brother. (p. 35).

in these characters we sound the depth and seriousness of his thought, and sentences such as these hold our attention. "A barrator is a horseleech that only sucks the corrupted blood of the law,"²³ or, "Without history a man's soul is purblind, seeing only the things which almost touch his eyes."²⁴

Not only is Fuller's wisdom evident in his character writing, but another trait also, which is an essential characteristic of all who lay any claim to being essayists--he knew men, and although learned, never lost contact with actual conditions. He is seldom blinded by prejudice and writes in the light of his own judgment and his own experience. For this reason his observations are always broad, keen, and abounding in real understanding. One could give many illustrations of this side of his thought, but one or two typical ones must suffice. "The good yeoman," he says, "is a gentleman in ore, whom the next age may see refined, and is the wax capable of a gentle impression, when the prince shall stamp it,"²⁵ and, "The favorite is a court dial, whereon all look whilst the king shines on him, and none when it is night with him."²⁶ In the Wise Statesman, one of the characters which shows most of all his shrewdness and knowledge of practical affairs, there is also a touch of delightful irony. After discussing the care of statesmen for their

23.--The Common Barrator. (p. 330).

24.--The General Artist. (p. 56).

25.--Chap. XXXIII.

26.--The Favorite. (p. 191).

own private business affairs, he adds, "and a small hospital will hold those statesmen who have impaired their means, not by their private carelessness, but carefulness for the public."²⁷

The second resemblance between the style of the character and the essay is in the tone of the two. How does Fuller present his subject matter? The maxims which he uses in all his characters are elaborated and illustrated in the familiar vein of the essayist. These do not give a stiff and conventional tone to his work, but just enough concreteness to keep it clear and not too diffuse. Fuller's ease in writing coupled with his ready flow of thought, produces a quaint flavor of familiarity, an almost conversational style. It is this which makes his works, especially *The Holy and Profane State*, so readable. In one place he says, "some have questioned ventriloquy, when men speak strangely out of their bellies, whether it can be done lawfully or no: might I coin the word 'cordiloquy', when men draw the doctrines out of their hearts; sure all would count this lawful and commendable."²⁸

It is always a delight to read Fuller in his most chatty vein. It gives one the impression of having had a friendly talk with a man who discusses weighty problems with a generally grave countenance, yet with an outrageously amused twinkle in his eye. "The elder brother," he says, "relieveth his distressed kindred, yet so as he continues them in their calling. Otherwise they would all make his house their hospital, his kindred their calling.

27.--Chap. LXX. (p. 207).

28.--The Faithful Minister. (p. 62).

When one being an husbandman, challenged kindred of Robert Grost-head, bishop of Lincoln, and thereupon requested favor of him to bestow an office on him; 'Cousin,' (quoth the bishop), 'if your cart be broken, I'll mend it; if your plough be old, I'll give you a new one, and seed to sow your land; but an husbandman I found you, and an husbandman I'll leave you.' It is better to ease poor kindred in their profession, than to ease them from their profession."²⁹

He concludes the character of the Wise Statesman in a similar vein. "To conclude, some plead that dissembling is lawful in state-craft, upon the supposition that men must meet with others who dissemble. Yea, they hold, that thus to counterfeit, se defendendo, against a crafty co-rival, is no sin, but a just punishment on our adversity, who first began it. And therefore sometimes statesmen sometimes must use crooked shoes to fit hurled feet. Besides, the honest politician would quickly be beggared, if receiving back money from cheaters, he pays them in good silver, and not in their own coin back again. For my part I confess that herein I rather see what, then whither to fly; neither able to answer their arguments, nor willing to allow their practice. But what shall I say? they need to have steady heads who can dive into these gulfs of policy, and come out with a safe conscience. I will look no longer on those whirlpools of state, lest my pen turn giddy."³⁰

29.--Chap. XIV. (p. 36).

30.--The Wise Statesman. (p. 207).

Though there is scarcely a character which does not have some witty or whimsical touch,³¹ those of the Witch and the Good Yeoman are most thoroughly humorous. In the former,³² apparently a grave comment on witches, it is like a thread subtly woven through the whole so that as we read we are in doubt as to whether he is in earnest or is really lightly ridiculing that current superstition of his day, for he tells us "it is very hard to prove a witch as infernal contracts are made without witnesses.....Witches are commonly of the feminine sex. Ever since Satan tempted our grandmother Eve, he knows that that sex is most liquorish to taste, and most careless to swallow his baits." In the latter³³ the good sense and practical advice which Fuller gives the reader, is enlivened and vivified by many flashes of wit. "Some hold when hospitality died in England, she gave her last groan amongst the yeomen of Kent. And still at our yeoman's table you shall have as many joints as dishes: no meat disguised with strange sauces; no straggling joint of a sheep in the midst of a pasture of grass, beset with salads on every side, but solid substantial food; no servitors (more nimble with their hand than the guests with their teeth) take away meat before stomachs are taken away."

We may turn to almost any page of Fuller's voluminous

- 31.--Here is a typical example, taken from the Good Sea-Captain, (p. 104), of these touches of humor which appear so often in all of the characters. "But our Captain counts the image of God nevertheless his image cut in ebony as if done in ivory, and in the blackest Moors he sees the representation of the King of heaven."
- 32.--The Witch. (p. 293)--The Profane State.
- 33.--The Good Yeoman. (p. 91).

writings and be sure of finding some form of entertainment or amusement. His amazing wit reveals itself in any number of varied forms from the broadest humor to the most delicate and subtle irony. The following are examples drawn from his works in general, and these illustrate that peculiar witty flavor of his writing which his nineteenth century critics call "quaint facetiousness."

"Philosophers place memory in the rear of the head; and it seems the mine of memory lies there, because there naturally men dig for it, scratching it when they are at a loss.

"A commonplace book contains many notions in garrison, whence the owner may draw out an army into the field on competent warning."³⁴

"Generally nature hangs out a sign of simplicity in the face of a fool; and there is enough in his countenance for a hue and cry to take him on suspicion: or else it is stamped on the figure of his body; their heads sometimes so little, that there is no room for wit, sometimes so long, that there is no wit for so much room.

"A court jester is an office which none but he that hath wit can perform, and none but he that wants wit will perform."³⁵

In his Pisgah Sight of Palestine, which is a veritable geography of wit, he describes Pisgah, "the hill where Moses viewed the land; hereabouts the angel buried him, and also buried the grave, lest it should occasion idolatry."³⁶

³⁴--Of Memory. The Holy State. (p. 140).

³⁵--Of Natural Fools. The Holy State. (p. 143).

³⁶--Pisgah Sight of Palestine. (p. 70).

"Some men there be, whose charitable deeds are as rare as an eclipse or a blazing star. These men deserve to be pardoned for their pious deeds, they are so seldom guilty of them."³⁷

"Christ said, 'I am the Door.' He who is so sottish as to conceive that Christ was a material door, sheweth himself to be a post indeed."³⁸

To conclude these examples of Fuller's humor here is one from his Worthies which is perhaps his most popular work, for it is a medley of varied and inexhaustible amusement and written in the spirit of the good-natured gossip. Here it is we find the shrewd picture of the wit combats of Ben Jonson and Shakespeare compared to a battle between a Spanish galleon and an English man-of-war.

"Master Jonson, like the former, was built far higher in learning, solid but slow in performance. Shakespeare--like the English man-of-war--lesser in bulk but lighter in starting, could turn with all tides, tack about, and take advantage of all winds."³⁹

Inserted inconspicuously in the third book of the Holy State are what Fuller called "General Rules." These are in reality twenty-five moral essays. That he fully recognized the relation between his characters and the essay proper comes out in his own words in the preface to the Holy and Profane State where he says, "as for the matter of this Book, therein I am resident on my profession;....

37.--Comment on Ruth. (p. 166). Wm. Tegg, Editor. London, 1868.

38.--A Comment on 1 Cor. XI. 24. (p. 58). Wm. Tegg, Editor. London, 1867.

39.--The Worthies of England. (p. 126). County of Warwick-shire.

curious method, expect none, essays for the most part not being placed as at a feast, but placing themselves as at an ordinary."

The chief difference between the essays in the Holy State and the characters is in the subject matter. Their general qualities of style and structure are the same, that is, what essay qualities apply to the characters also apply to these "general rules," but in the case of the latter to a greater degree, these being even more familiar and discursive in their tone. The essays Of Books and Of Recreations,⁴⁰ for instance, are in a more easy, chatty vein than any of the characters, and they approach nearer the essay proper because of their striking similarity to a particular type of this literary form.

The resemblance to Bacon is instructive. It manifests itself in both the purpose and method of the two men. Each aims to give practical moral instruction by direct precept, and as a result, almost all their sentences have the air of current proverbs. They each use maxims of practical wisdom, yet embody them in such striking metaphors, that the effect is a combination of solid truth, beautiful imagery and graceful expression. Their moralizing is clothed in such attractive form--here Fuller differs from Bacon because of the constant play of his wit, which had no place in the more austere ideal of the latter--that the truth and wisdom of what they say, impresses the reader so forcibly that he forgets the intent was didactic. A number of the essays of the two men offer compari-

40.--Of Books, (p. 161), and of Recreations. (p. 148).

son in detail.

In the first place I find that six⁴¹ of the twenty-five essays of Fuller have the same titles as Bacon's. Let us examine these to see if the thought is similar, as we have already found that their purpose and method are. Bacon says, "he that hath wife and children hath given hostages to fortune; for they are impediments to great enterprises, either of virtue or mischief. Certainly the best works, and of greatest merit for the public, have proceeded from the unmarried or childless men; which both in affection and means have married and endowed the public;"⁴² and Fuller tells us, "the bachelors be the strongest stakes, married men are the best binders in the hedge of the commonwealth."⁴³ Here the former gives a commonplace the rank of a philosophic axiom, and the latter invests it with the point and vigor of a paradox.

There is a second essay,⁴⁴ however, in which many of the ideas of the two men are identical. It is as if Fuller had had Bacon's essay before him while he was writing his. Let me quote several passages, first, one from Bacon, then its parallel from Fuller to prove this. On the proper kind of people for colonists, Bacon and Fuller agreed.

41.--Of Marriage, Of Plantations, Of Travelling, Of Building,
Of Deformity, and Of Anger.

42.--Of Marriage. Bacon's Essays. (p. 32).

43.--Of Marriage. Fuller's Holy State. (p. 172).

44. Of Plantations. Bacon, (p. 154).--Fuller, (p. 156).

"It is a shameful and unblessed thing to take the scum of a people, and wicked condemned men to be the people with whom you plant; and not only so, but it spoileth the plantation."

"Let the planters be honest, skilful, and painful people. For if they be such as leap thither from the gallows, can any hope for cream out of scum, when men send, as I may say, Christian savages to heathen savages?"

Both men agree that a plantation should be self-supporting to the point of actual trade.

"Consider likewise what commodities the soil where the plantation is doth naturally yield, that they may some way help defray the charge of the plantation."

"Let it have a self-sufficiency, or sound staple commodity to balance traffic with other countries."

The government of a plantation, according to Bacon and Fuller, should be in the hands of the noblemen, but here Fuller advises leniency of laws, while Bacon emphasizes the aristocratic theory of government wholly.

"Let not the government of the plantation depend upon too many counsellors and undertakers in the country that planteth, but upon a temperate number; and let those be rather noblemen and gentlemen, than merchants; for they look ever to the present gain."

"Let the prime undertakers be men of no shallow heads, nor narrow fortunes.....otherwise young plantations will never grow, if straitened with as hard laws as settled commonwealths."

Finally, on a just and humane treatment of savages by planters,

Bacon and Fuller agree.

"If you plant where savages are, do not only entertain them with trifles and gingles, but use them justly and graciously, with sufficient guard nevertheless." (Here in this last bit of advice, Bacon, the shrewd politician, speaks.)

"Let planters labor to be loved and feared of the natives, with whom let them use all just bargaining, being as naked in their dealings with them as the other in their going."

In the essays Of Travelling⁴⁵ and Of Building, we again see this striking resemblance in the ideals of the two writers. In the latter,⁴⁶ however, the spirit of the men is the same, but the matter of both is commonplace and makes quotations from them unprofitable. The following passages are from the essay Of Travelling.⁴⁷

"First, as was said, he must have some entrance into the language before he goeth."

"Get the language, in part, without which key thou shalt unlock little of moment."

"When a traveller returneth home, let him not leave the countries where he hath travelled altogether behind him; but maintain a correspondence by letter with those of his acquaintance which are of most worth-----and let his travel appear rather in his

45.--In this essay also it is interesting to note a suggestion of Owen Feltham's "Brief Character of the Low Countries under the States," pp. 41-63, of the Lusoria (1661) in the line,--"If thou wilt see much in a little, travel the Low Countries."(p.127)

46.--Of Building--Bacon, (p. 203), --Fuller, (p. 133).

47.--Of Travelling. Bacon,(p. 79),--Fuller, (p. 127).

discourse; let him be rather advised in his answers than forward to tell stories."

"Continue correspondence with some choice foreign friend after thy return; as some professor or secretary who virtually is the whole university or state----Let discourse rather be easily drawn, than willingly flow from thee, that thou mayest not seem weak to hold, or desirous to vent news, but content to gratify thy friends."

In the essay Of Deformity⁴⁸ notice the same thought and terse concise expression in each, for Bacon says "so that upon the matter, in a great wit, deformity is an advantage to rising," and Fuller, "Nature often recompenseth deformed bodies with excellent wits."

Of Anger⁴⁹ is the last of the essays of Fuller and Bacon whose title is identical. It differs from the foregoing ones in that it is a purely moral essay. It is interesting to note here how each man voices the same thought, but from a different point of view. "To seek to extinguish anger utterly, is but a bravery of the stoics.....Whosoever is out of patience, is out of possession of his soul.

"Take care that in anger a man reveal no secrets; for that makes him not fit for society.....

"See that you do not break off, in any business, in a fit of

48.--Bacon. Essays. (p. 200). Fuller. (p. 155).

49.--Bacon. Essays. (p. 258). Fuller. (p. 136).

anger, but however you shew bitterness, do not act anything that is not revocable."

These instructions have a touch of acidity, a tinge of bitterness which we naturally expect from a man of Bacon's harsh experiences and contact with life. The following advice by Fuller is the exact opposite:

"Anger is one of the sinews of the soul; he that wants it hath a maimed mind, and with Jacob, sinew shrunk in the hollow of his thigh, must needs halt.

"Fright not people from thy presence with the terror of thy intolerable impatience.

"Take heed of doing irrevocable acts in thy passion, as the revealing of secrets, which makes thee a bankrupt for society ever after: neither do such things which done once are done forever"..... An easy and prosperous life had engendered an almost provoking optimism in Fuller, which even the trials of the civil war period and the commonwealth could not sour.

Sometimes we find a similarity of phrasing and expression in the two men. The character of the Atheist,⁵⁰ for instance, suggests many forms of expression as well as the thought of Bacon's essay Of Atheism.⁵¹ The following passages show this clearly:

50.--The Profane State. (p. 305).

51.--Of Atheism. Bacon's Essays. (pp. 72-74).

"For none deny there is a God, but those for whom it maketh that there were no God."

"Not that he thinks there is no God, but thinks not there is a God, never minding or heeding him in the whole course of his life and actions."

"The contemplative atheist is rare; a Diagoras, a Bion, a Lucian perhaps, and some others; and yet they seem to be more than they are; for that all that impugn a received religion or superstition are by the adverse part branded with the name of atheists."

"A contemplative atheist being very rare, such as were Diagoras, Protagoras, Lucian, and Theodorus, who, though carrying God in his name, was an atheist in his opinion."

"The causes of Atheism are: divisions in religion, if they be many, for any one main division addeth zeal to both sides, but many divisions introduce atheism."

"First he quarrels at the diversities of religion in the world, complaining how great clerks dissent in their judgments, which makes him skeptical in all opinions."

"A third cause is, custom of profane scoffing in holy matters; which doth by little and little deface the reverence of religion."

"He scoffs and makes sport at sacred things. This, by degrees, abates the reverence of religion, and ulcers men's hearts with profaneness."

Before concluding this chapter on the character and the essay, I wish to give a few final examples from several other essays of their use of striking metaphors to clothe their maxims and paradoxes. The result has the effect of stimulating the reader

to further thought, and fits in exactly with the purpose of the two men. Here are examples of Bacon's metaphors.

"Praise is the reflection of virtue. But it is as the glass or body which giveth the reflection."⁵²

"Suspensions amongst thoughts are like bats amongst birds, they ever fly by twilight."⁵³

"Fortune is like the market; where many times if you can stay a little, the price will fall."⁵⁴

In close comparison with these are Fuller's.

"Fame is the echo of actions, resounding them to the world, save that the echo repeats only the last part, but fame relates all, and often more than all."⁵⁵

"Gravity is the ballast of the soul, which keeps the mind steady."⁵⁶

"Tombs are the clothes of the dead; a grave is but a plain suit, and a rich monument is one embroidered."⁵⁷

52.--Of Praise. (p. 341).

53.--Of Suspicion. (p. 149).

54.--Of Delays. (p. 98).

55.--Of Fame. (p. 174).

56.--Of Gravity. (p. 169).

57.--Of Tombs. (p. 151).

CHAPTER III.

The Meditation and the Essay.

When one turns from the character writing to the Meditations, he finds a decided difference in the tone and subject matter. The Meditations¹ include "Good Thoughts in Bad Times," "Good Thoughts in Worse Times," and "Mixed Contemplations in Better Times." These are personal reflections designed to lift the reader out of the atmosphere of controversy into one of calm, pious meditation. They consist of wholesome moral lessons, noble aspirations, illuminating comments on Scripture passages, historical incidents, and personal experiences. Fuller himself apologizes for this variety and range of subjects in his Preface to "Mixed Contemplations in Better Times."

"I confess myself subject to just censure," he says, "that I have not severally sorted these contemplations, which now are confusedly heaped, or rather huddled, together. This I confess was caused by my haste, the press hourly craving with the daughter of the horseleech, give, give."

This heaped confusion of ideas which Fuller laments, is for the reader a continual source of pleasure. The name 'Meditations' implies an intimate reflective mood in which the writer expresses

1.--The first of these, published about 1645 while Fuller was serving in the King's army, were intended for the religious among the soldiers. As the cause of the Royalists grew darker, he published the "Good Thoughts in Worse Times," two years later, and finally in 1660, added the "Mixed Contemplations in Better Times."

what he feels at any moment. One delights in the excellent maxims and ingenious moralizations, expressed as they are, in rich and striking sentences, full of force and meaning, and showing us the original mind and deep moral spirit of the writer.

The religious meditation of the 17th century bore a strong resemblance to the familiar essay in one respect. It was egoistic in tendency. Through it the writer found an outlet for his own opinions and emotions. It was a step forward in the direction of the later essay. Sir Thomas Browne, one of the most egotistical English prose writers of his age, in his meditations tells us about his tastes and habits, but nowhere do we get such a delightfully intimate, personal view of his daily living as these meditations of Fuller reveal. The latter excelled all his contemporaries in this particular. He comes closest to Montaigne in this novelty and freshness of self-revelation. The reader is charmed. Fuller, also like Montaigne, notes his faults for the purpose of actually correcting them.

As the Meditations are throughout a revelation of the man, the personality of Fuller is everywhere apparent, whether we see him in the character of a politician, or of a divine. In his moments of self-revelation especially we read his innermost thoughts and feelings. This peculiar way of revealing his personality, does not appear in any essayists before the nineteenth century when Charles Lamb wrote his Essays of Elia. It is to illustrate this peculiar kind of self-revelation that I quote the following passages.

"Lord, I discover an arrant laziness in my soul. For when I am^{to} read a chapter in the Bible, before I begin it, I look where it endeth. And if it endeth not on the same side, I cannot keep my hands from turning over the leaf, to measure the length thereof on the other side; if it swells too many verses, I begin to grudge. Surely my heart is not rightly affected."²

"Shameful my sloth, that have deferred my night prayer till I am in bed. This lying along is an improper posture for piety..... But may God pardon my idleness this once, I will not again offend in the same kind, by his grace hereafter."³

"Some, perchance, may guess me to be good by my writings, and so I shall deceive my reader. But^{if} I do not desire to be good, I most of all deceive myself. I can make a hundred meditations sooner than subdue the least sin in my soul."⁴

"Lord, when in writing I have occasion to insert these passages, God willing, etc., I observe that I can scarce hold my hand from encircling these words in a parenthesis, as if they were not essential to the sentence.....Whereas, indeed, they are not only of the commission at large, but so of the quorum, that without them all the rest is nothing, wherefore hereafter I will write those words

2.--Meditation XXI. (p. 44).

3.--Meditation VI. (p. 109).

4.--Meditation XXV. (p. 95).

fully and fairly.....Let critics censure it for bad grammar, I am sure it is good divinity."5

"Lord, this day I disputed with myself, whether or no I had said my prayers this morning, and I could not call to mind any passage whence I could certainly conclude that I had offered my prayers unto thee. It seems I had said them, and only said them, rather by heart than with my heart. Alas, are not devotions thus done, in effect left undone?"6

"Lord, I confess this morning I remembered my breakfast but forgot my prayers.....It is now noon, too late for a morning, too early for an evening sacrifice. My corrupt heart prompts me to put off my prayers till night, but I know it too well, or rather too ill, to trust it. Be pleased therefore now to accept them."7

"Almost twenty years ago I heard a profane jest, and still remember it. How many pious passages of far later date have I forgotten! It seems my soul is like a filthy pond, wherein fish die soon, and frogs live long."8

"Lord, I perceive my soul deeply guilty of envy. By my good will, I would have none prophesy but mine own Moses. I had rather thy work were undone, than done better by another than by myself; had rather that thine enemies were all alive, than that I should kill

5.--Meditation XXVII. (p. 16).

6.--Meditation XIX. (p. 18).

7.--Meditation XXI. (p. 92).

8.--Contemplation XII. (p. 84).

but my thousand, and others their ten thousands of them. Dispossess me, Lord, of this bad spirit, and turn my envy into holy emulation."⁹

Besides his own self-analysis which tells so much of the inner man, we also remember that Fuller was a clergyman, and his faith, which was so vital a part of his thought, here reveals itself in his earnest tho eccentric devoutness of spirit. Through so much of what he wrote, his perfect serenity and trust shines forth strong and clear.

"My spirits," he says, "are not yet forfeited to despair, having one lively spark of hope in my heart, because God is ever where he was before."¹⁰

"Thy servants are now praying in the church, and I am here staying at home, detained by necessary occasions. Though I cannot pray with them I pray for them. Yea, this comforts me, I am with thy congregation, because I would be with it."¹¹

Now and then we come upon some passage which has a half-sad, half-whimsical philosophy.

"Ha is the interjection of laughter; Ah is an interjection of sorrow....How quickly, in the age of a minute, in the very turning of a breath, is our mirth changed to mourning."¹²

9.--Meditation XIII. (p. 12)

10.--Meditation XVI. (p. 122)

11.--Meditation X. (p. 10)

12.--Contemplation XIV. (p. 86)

As Fuller's religious faith never forsook him, the result is that most of his philosophy is optimistic.

"Many things in England are out of joint for the present, and a strange confusion there is in church and state, but let this comfort us, we trust it is confusion in tendency to order. And, therefore, let us for a time more patiently comport therewith."¹³

"Blessed be God, we are now brought into a better condition, yea, we are past the equilibrium; the beam is beginning to break on the better side, and our hopes to have the mastery of our despairs. God grant this twilight may prove crepusculum matutinum, fore-running the rising of the sun, and increase of our happiness."¹⁴

In addition to his optimism, many passages from his writings show his tolerance, for Fuller was just and broadminded in all his opinions. He harbored no political enmity, nor was he blinded to the several merits of the various religious sects of the time. He believed in a middle course, preached it, yet acknowledged that it was the most difficult to follow.

"As for other sects, we grudge not that gifts be bestowed upon them. Let them have a toleration (and that I assure you is a great gift indeed,) and be permitted peaceably and privately to enjoy their consciences both in opinions and practices. Such favor may safely (not to say ought justly to) be afforded unto them so long as they continue peaceably in our Israel, and disturb not the estate. This

13.--Meditation XLIII. (p. 355).

14.--Meditation XXX. (331).

gift granted unto them, they need not to be sent away into the east or any other country."¹⁵ Again he says:

"The less we can give, the more we should forgive, but alas! this is the worst of all, that giving goeth so much against our covetousness, but forgiving goeth more against our pride and ambition."¹⁶

Fuller had been accused by the hot-blooded Royalists of lukewarmness to the cause, but he himself always made a careful distinction between his policy of moderation, and lukewarmness. The following passages show how he appreciated the difficulty of holding this point of view:

"This is the misery of moderation. This is an affliction attending moderate men, that they have not an active party to side with them and favor them. The moderate man, eminent for no excess, will have few patrons to protect, or persons to adhere unto him"..... Then he adds, with his usual optimism and faith; "but what saith St. Paul: If in this life only we have hope in Christ, we are of all men the most miserable."¹⁷

"Peace in our land, like St. Paul, is now likely to be encountered with two opposite parties, such as are for the liberty of a commonwealth, and such as are for an absolute monarchy; but I hope

15.--Contemplation XXI. Mixed Contemplations in Better Times. (p. 258)

16.--Contemplation XI. Mixed Contemplations in Better Times. (p. 312)

17.--Contemplation XXIII. Mixed Contemplations in Better Times. (p. 278).

neither of both are so considerable in their number, parts, and influence on the people, but that the moderate party, advocates for peace, will prevail for the settling thereof."¹⁸

Another side of Fuller's personality is revealed through his political ideas. To speak of him as a politician might convey a somewhat wrong impression, but he was keenly alive to the situation, and labored hard to allay the ferment which was fast growing into open rebellion. The meditations reflect the troubles of his age, and his observations on the conditions of the times are as keen as they are profound.

"We live in a land and age of dissension, counties, cities, towns, villages, families, all divided in opinions, in affections, each man almost divided from himself, with fears and distractions."¹⁹

"How wrangling and litigious were we in the time of peace! How many actions were created of nothing! Suits we had commenced about a mouthful of grass, or a handful of hay. Now he who formerly would sue his neighbor for pedibus ambulando, can behold his whole field lying waste and must be content. We see our goods taken from us and dare say nothing, not so much as seeking any legal redress, because certain not to find it. May we be restored in due time to our former properties, but not to our former peevishness."²⁰ And again in another place he cries out, "O the distractions of our age! And

18.--Contemplation XXV. Mixed Contemplations in Better Times. (p.278).

19.--Meditation I. (p. 153).

20.--Contemplation XI. (p. 84).

how many thousands know as little why the sword was drawn, as when it will be sheathed."²¹

Fuller was a royalist at heart, and when the civil war broke, he sided with the King, and joined his army as a chaplain. The meditations during this short period of military service ring with his loyalty to the royalist cause. I shall quote one.

"May I die in that government under which I was born, where a monarch doth command. Kings, where they see cause, have graciously granted pardon to men appointed to death; herein the lively image of God, to whom belongs mercies and forgiveness. And although I will endeavor so to behave myself as not to need my sovereign's favor in this kind, yet, because none can warrant his innocency in all things, it is comfortable living in such a commonwealth, where pardons heretofore on occasion have been, and hereafter may be procured."²²

These meditations, which are altogether so delightful, have given us an insight into the character of Fuller, the man. Lucky it is today that this quaint and wholly lovable personality still lives for us in his works. I conclude with one last passage which, after all, during most of his life, is the keynote of his thought:

"God grant we may hit the golden mean, and endeavor to avoid

21.--Preface to the Christian Reader before "Good Thoughts in Worse Times."

22.--Meditation XII. (p. 117).

all extremes; the fanatic anabaptist on the one side, and the fiery zeal of the Jesuit on the other, that so we may be true protestants, or, which is a far better name, real Christians indeed."²³

23.--Contemplation XLIII. (p. 355).

CHAPTER IV.

Conclusion.

One who has never read Thomas Fuller has missed a great deal in the way both of entertainment and instruction. The eulogies of a score of nineteenth century critics, including such famous names as Lamb and Coleridge, are evidence that his literary merit is not unappreciated. The quaint school of the seventeenth century furnished these romanticists with the individuality for which they were looking. Fuller was the quaintest of the quaint; one needs to read very little of him to realize this. In addition, he displayed a spontaneous and exuberant wit. Quaintness, wit, wisdom, these three, are the keynote of his charm, and the basis of his genius.

Fuller's voluminous writings include characters, essays, histories, meditations, biographies, and sermons. My purpose has been to study this miscellaneous prose in its relation to the essay. What are the results? Although this delightful humorist among English divines is not usually considered as an essayist, he wrote prose which in its general style and tone makes it not unlike that literary form.

Throughout his works, the general style is unmistakably akin to that of the essay. It flows along smoothly and easily, adorned with graceful expressions, heightened by striking figures, and enlivened by his ever ready wit. Yet it is never obscure, but clear, lucid, and direct. In this respect Fuller is more truly an essayist than any of his contemporaries.

The subject matter, as well as the style of Fuller's writing, indicates the essayist. His subjects range from customs through personal experiences, practical advice, politics, biography, poetry,

moral topics, Biblical and religious themes, to philosophy.

His "Holy and Profane State", especially his general rules in the third book, are written in the manner of the contemporary essay. The seventeenth century character and the Baconian essay, already closely allied as forms, almost merge into one in Fuller, the greatest of the character writers. Instead of the formal catalogue of maxims with its brusque beginning and abrupt ending, he has filled in and elaborated these, beginning in an informal vein and rounding off the whole with a genial personal touch. This seventeenth century character writing later developed into the periodic essay of the eighteenth century. Fuller provided the first transition by endowing it with many essay features.

Fuller's resemblance to Bacon, the master essayist of his century, is suggested by similarities in purpose, thought, and treatment.

His Meditations, on the other hand, indicate a complete independence of the Baconian influence. Here we get a peculiar kind of personal self-revelation of the author which is unknown in any other literature of the seventeenth century. The frank yet amiable delineation of his whims, prejudices and failings, the intimate view of his daily living, are an echo of Montaigne and an anticipation of the familiar essay which ^{was} perfected by Charles Lamb.

Thomas Fuller, therefore, may be linked in three ways to the essay. First, his affiliation with Bacon as to subject matter and purpose. In this respect he is of course like the contemporary essay. In addition to this is an occasional habit of self-revelation which is more characteristic of the later essay or of Montaigne; and

lastly, a style characteristic of all his writings, which is clear, humorous, intimate, and leisurely.

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